

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 8-9, 11-12, 16 and 19-20 were rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mullee (U.S. Patent No. 6,306,564). Applicants amend claim 8 and respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection. Claims 2-3, 5-6, 15 and 17-18 remain withdrawn from consideration.

Claim 8, as amended, recites that the pumping means is disposed between the blending means and the corresponding mixing section, and that the pumping means pumps the chemical formulation towards the corresponding mixing section. Thus, the position of the “pumping means” is clarified in currently amended claim 8. Support for this amendment is found on page 19, lines 13-15 of the specification and Fig. 2 through Fig. 7. The details of the chemical-agent supply units 4A and 4B are not shown in Fig. 7 since the construction thereof is the same as of the chemical-agent supply unit 4 in Fig. 2.

As a result of the claimed positioning of the pumping means, as illustrated in Fig. 2, the blending means can be disposed in the normal pressure region, which is preferable because the number of the components to be disposed in the high-pressure region can be reduced, as described on page 26, line 17 to page 27 line 2 of the specification.

On the contrary, the apparatus of Mullee does not comprise the pumping means which is disposed between the solvent chambers 44, 46 and the line 43. In other words, the solvent chambers 44 and 46 are in the high-pressure region because there is only one pump 92 in the apparatus shown in Fig. 2 of Mullee.

Therefore, the above limitation of claim 8 is not disclosed in Mullee, and hence, claim 8, as amended, is allowable over the cited prior art. Favorable reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,



Anna Vishev
Registration No.: 45,018
Ostrolenk, Faber, Gerb & Soffen LLP
1180 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036
(212) 382 0700